

# Message from the Governor



December, 2002

Each year, thousands of Missourians die or are hospitalized as a result of injuries from motor vehicle crashes, falls, assaults, occupational injuries and farming, sporting, and recreational activities. Many of those who survive injuries experience long-term or permanent disabilities resulting in time lost from work and family, as well as costly medical and rehabilitation expenses, and untold pain and suffering.

As injuries are the leading cause of death and disability in the first three decades of life, I have called upon state departments and other key stakeholders to work collaboratively with local communities to implement interventions that will reduce the number of injuries statewide. While state government can lead the charge by calling attention to the problem of injuries in Missouri, Missourians must also accept this problem by changing attitudes and behaviors concerning injuries.

Citizens must accept that injuries associated with motor vehicle crashes or falls are not "accidents" and much more can be done to prevent these injuries. Citizens must realize that violence in the form of abuse, assault, or suicide are not only within the purview of law enforcement and the criminal justice system, but also of the public health, mental health, and social service delivery systems.

"Injuries in Missouri: A Call to Action" provides a snapshot of injuries from a statewide and county perspective. The report offers a starting place for individuals and communities to consider interventions that have been proven to be effective in preventing injuries in other communities and to determine resources that are currently available or needed to take action to reduce the number of injuries locally.

Please use this book as a foundation and as a resource to draw upon to help build local coalitions to address injuries in your community. Remember injury prevention is NO accident!

Sincerely,

Bob Holden  
Governor